

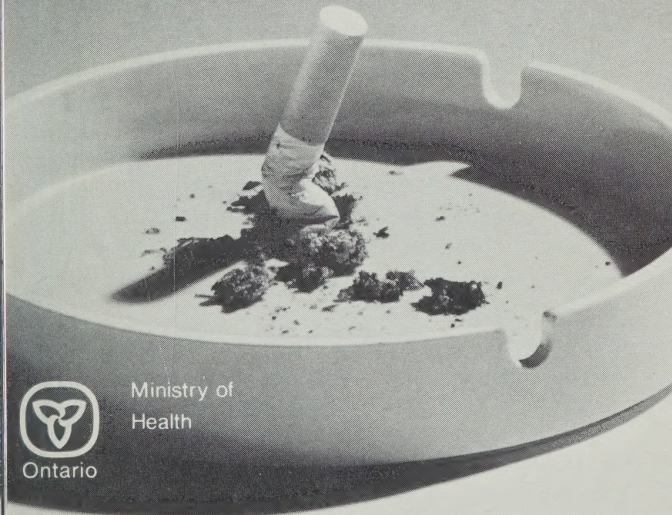
QUITTING ...a mind game

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“Quitting” is a mind game for smokers. It involves analysis, strategy, plans of attack, diversionary tactics — even rewards. It can be fun, but it’s a serious game.

“Quitting” is played in stages, and each stage must be completed before the player can advance to the next.

Before the real action starts, the player works out a game plan on paper and reviews the reasons for playing.

The decision

Unfortunately, people can’t stop smoking unless they want to. So first they have to decide if they’re ready to play the game.

Each does a little self-analysis — listing reasons for smoking and reasons for quitting. Periodically, the lists are compared and if the reasons for smoking outweigh the reasons for quitting, the player drops out of the game. If they don’t, then on to Strategy.

Strategy

Some people plan to play for the quick win and attack smoking head-on. They quit cold. Others plan to phase out cigarettes gradually.

Each day they plan to smoke half the number of cigarettes they smoked the day before. And then one day, within a week, they make the final effort and quit altogether. If a player takes more than a week, he must go back to self-analysis.

Approach

Careful players plan to avoid situations where they will be tempted to smoke — the early morning or after dinner cup of coffee, for example, or the smoking section of a theatre. Many habits go hand-in-hand with a cigarette.

So they list alternatives. They may decide to drink tea instead of coffee, take up a new hobby instead of watching TV, or go for a brisk walk when they have nothing else to do and the craving for a cigarette is especially strong. “Quitting” is a mind game, and players may have to change any number of habit patterns in order to stop smoking.

After players have thought out the first three stages of “Quitting” and committed them to paper, they can proceed to the tough part of the game.

Working the plan

The smokers make the big move and work their plan — they quit. They throw away their pack of cigarettes one evening and get off to a fresh start the next morning.

Diversionsary tactics

Quitters can refer to their list for substitutes to fill the sudden gap that has appeared in their lifestyle. They can eat an apple instead of smoking a cigarette, or when they feel like inhaling a lungful of smoke, they can take a few deep breaths of fresh air. Or doodle when they need something to do with their hands.

There are many substitutes for smoking and each quitter finds favorites that prove most effective.

Anger and frustration are natural results of quitting. They're natural, but they certainly can be minimized. The quitter can chew gum, get involved in a fitness program — any activity that will burn energy and work out frustration. Cigarettes are very attractive in idle moments, but the serious quitter recognizes the danger — and keeps busy.

Double-think, that's the secret — trying to think not of the cigarette being missed, but of the healthy food and exercise that is taking its place.

Rewards

For many smokers, quitting is the most difficult thing they will ever accomplish — but the rewards are many.

Quitters are healthier. They have better breathing for sports. Their food tastes better; cooking, flowers and perfume all smell better. Breath and clothes no longer smell of stale tobacco, and teeth and fingers are white instead of yellow.

Quitters are wealthier. If they smoked 20 cigarettes a day before they quit, quitters are at least \$200 a year richer.

Quitters are wiser. They have a better self-image and more self-respect because they met the challenge head-on — and licked it. Quitters feel good about it.

And they're likely to live longer. Scientists estimate that every cigarette smoked cuts about 15 minutes off life expectancy, so a pack-a-day smoker loses five hours for every day, or two and a half months for every year he smokes.

“Quitting” is a mind game, played by smokers — won by quitters.